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BOROUGH OF PONTEFRAC T.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 1940.

To the Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors
of the Borough of Pontefract.

Gentlemen, ...

I have the honour to present for your information and consideration an Interim Report on the Health of the Borough during the year 1940. It is my nineteenth Annual Report, and on account of the abnormal circumstances prevailing, has been curtailed in accordance with the requirements of the Minister of Health as set out in Circular 2067.

The report is confined to essential matters and, as in my Report for 1939, much of the statistical information normally given has been omitted. After the termination of the war a report will be made dealing fully with the period from the beginning of 1939 to the end of the last complete year.

PART ONE.

STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS.

Area of the Borough: 4,865 acres.

Registrar-General's estimate of resident population: 20,880.

Number of inhabited houses (end of 1940) according to
Rate Books: 5,562.

Rateable value: £118,652. (1939: £118,534)

Sum represented by penny rate: £466. (1939: £451).

Extracts from Vital Statistics.

Live Births:	Male	Female	Total
Legitimate ...	195	184	379
Illegitimate ...	9	4	13
Total ...	204	188	392

Birth rate per 1,000 estimated resident population: 18.8

Stillbirths:	Male	Female	Total
Legitimate ...	11	4	15
Illegitimate ...	0	1	1
Total ...	11	5	16

Rate per 1,000 total (live and still) births: 39.2

Deaths:	Male	Female	Total
All causes ...	160	120	280
Death rate per 1,000 population:	14.9		
Puerperal causes	-	1	1
Cancer	16	16	32
Measles	0	0	0
Whooping Cough	0	0	0
Diarrhoea (under 2 years)	1	0	1

Death Rate of Infants under one year of age:

All infants per 1,000 live births ...	74
Legitimate Infants per 1,000 legitimate live births	71
Illegitimate Infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births	154

The principal causes of death are set out in the following table:

Table I

Causes of death	Male	Female	Total
Scarlet fever	1	0	1
Diphtheria	1	2	3
Tuberculosis, pulmonary	10	5	15
Syphilitic disease	1	0	1
Influenza	4	4	8
Acute infective encephalitis	0	1	1
Cancer	16	16	32
Diabetes	1	3	4
Intra-cranial vascular lesions	19	22	41
Heart disease	32	29	61
Other circulatory diseases	1	0	1
Bronchitis	16	5	21
Pneumonia	9	10	19
Other respiratory diseases	1	1	2
Ulceration of stomach or duodenum	3	0	3
Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age)	1	0	1
Appendicitis	1	1	2
Other digestive diseases	7	2	9
Nephritis	2	3	5
Maternal causes (other than sepsis)	-	1	1
Premature birth	8	1	9
Congenital causes, etc.	3	5	8
Road traffic accidents	4	1	5
Other violent causes	9	1	10
All other causes	10	7	17
Totals	160	120	280

280 deaths were registered during the year, 7 more than in the previous year. This figure gives a crude death rate of 13.4, which when multiplied by the areal comparability factor of 1.11, gives a corrected rate of 14.9. The rate for England and Wales is 14.3.

Of the 280 deaths occurring, 29 were in children under 1 year of age. Female deaths numbered 120, 5 less than were recorded last year; male deaths numbered 160, an increase of 12.

Heart disease gives the highest death rate, 61 deaths having been registered as due to this cause, 11 less than last year. Intracranial vascular lesions accounted for 41 deaths, 21 more than in 1939, whilst cancer was responsible for 32 deaths, 13 less than in the previous year.

Diseases of the respiratory system accounted for 42 deaths, 12 more than last year; whilst diseases of the digestive system were responsible for 15 deaths, an increase of 7.

Infective diseases were given as cause of death in 29 cases, 2 less than in the previous year.

Infant Mortality.

The number of deaths of infants under one year of age was 29, 6 more than in 1939; this considerable increase is due to the high figure for pneumonia, 10, as against 5 in 1939. This yields an infant mortality rate of 74 per 1,000 births, as compared with 58 in the previous year. The rate for the triennial period 1936-1938 was 62. The 1940 rate for England and Wales is 55.

The following table gives the causes of infant deaths and age groups:

Table II.

Causes of death	Age groups								All ages under 1 year		
	Under 1 week	1 and under 2 weeks	2 and under 3 weeks	3 and under 4 weeks	1 and under 3 months	3 and under 6 months	6 and under 9 months	9 and under 12 months	Males	Females	Totals
Congenital malformation	1	1		1	2				5	0	5
Pneumonia		1			2	4	2	1	5	5	10
Prematurity	4		4			1			8	1	9
Injury at birth	1								1	0	1
Congenital debility	1								1	0	1
Diarrhoea					1				1	0	1
Atelactasis	1								1	0	1
Intussusception							1		1	0	1
Totals	8	2	4	1	5	5	3	1	18	11	29

Maternal Mortality.

There were no deaths from puerperal sepsis, but one due to other maternal causes. The following figures show the position during the past five years:-

Year	No. of maternal deaths	Rate per 1,000 (live and still) births
1936	2	5.62
1937	2	4.67
1938	1	2.36
1939	0	-
1940	1	2.45

P A R T T W O.

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES.

Maternity and Child Welfare.

The arrangements for maternity and child welfare are as last year. Whilst attendances at the Centre show a decrease on last year, the number of attendances by children under 1 year being 4,734, and the number by children between 1 and 5 years being 1,127, the number of children who first attended at the Centre during the year rose from 330 to 358 and the total number of children who attended was 571, 39 more than in 1939.

The number of visits paid by Health Visitors was 6,766 as compared with 8,591 in the previous year. 272 expectant mothers attended at the Ante-Natal Clinic during the year.

The total quantity of liquid milk supplied during the first half of the year to expectant and nursing mothers and young children (i.e. up to the commencement of the National Milk Scheme in July) was 994 gallons. The liquid milk was supplied free of charge. 9,710 lbs. of dried milk was supplied at cost price, except in necessitous cases, where it was supplied free of charge.

Home Nursing, Ambulance Service; Hospitals, and Laboratory facilities.

These services are as last year.

P A R T T H R E E.

PREVALENCE OF, AND CONTROL OVER,

INFECTIOUS AND OTHER DISEASES.

504 cases of disease were notified during 1940. This is an increase of 226 on the previous year's figure. The increase is due mainly to the coming into operation of the Measles and Whooping Cough Regulations, under which 197 cases of measles and 6 of whooping cough were notified. Other substantial increases were recorded in scarlet fever (11), pneumonia (18), and chickenpox (12). Enteric fever was not notified during the year; but cerebro-spinal fever, which had been absent in 1939, was reported on 13 occasions. There was a decrease of 39 in the number of cases of diphtheria notified.

Notifiable Diseases (other than Tuberculosis) during the Year 1940.

The following table gives particulars of the incidence of notifiable diseases:-

Table III.

Diseases	Total notified cases		Cases admitted to hospital		Total deaths	
	Civilian	Non-Civilian	Civilian	Non-Civilian	Civilian	Non-Civilian
Scarlet fever	34	0	0	-	1	-
Diphtheria	44	3	44	3	3	0
Pneumonia	48	2	0	1	3	0
Puerperal pyrexia	2	0	2	-	0	-
Cerebro-spinal fever	12	1	12	1	0	0
Acute poliomyelitis	1	0	1	-	0	-
Ophthalmia neonatorum	1	-	0	-	0	-
Erysipelas	14	1	0	1	0	0
Chickenpox	106	0	0	-	0	-
Measles	196	1	0	0	0	0
Whooping Cough	6	0	0	-	0	-

TUBERCULOSIS.

In the following table new cases and mortality are classified.

Table IV.

Age periods	New cases				Deaths			
	Respiratory		Non-respiratory		Respiratory		Non-respiratory	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
Under 5 years			2	1				
5 and under 15	1	1	2					
15 and under 25		3	1	1	1	2		
25 and under 35	7	5			5	2		
35 and under 45	2							
45 and under 55	1				1			
55 and under 65	3							
65 and over	3	1			3	1		
Totals	17	10	5	2	10	5	0	0

The following table summarises particulars contained on the register:-

Table V.

Number of cases on register	Respiratory		Non-respiratory		Total in register
	M.	F.	M.	F.	
At the commencement of 1940	71	46	36	30	183
Notified under the Regulations of 1930 for the first time during 1940	16	9	5	2	32
Brought to notice otherwise than by formal notification	1	1	0	0	2
Removed during 1940	22	10	9	6	47
At the end of 1940	66	46	32	26	170

The reasons for removal of cases from the register are stated in the following table:-

Entries relating to -	Respiratory		Non-respiratory		Totals
	M.	F.	M.	F.	
Persons who have died	10	5	0	0	15
Persons certified by the medical practitioner in attendance to have recovered	11	5	9	6	31
Persons who have ceased to reside permanently in the district	1	0	0	0	1
Totals	22	10	9	6	47

Primary notifications pursuant to the Public Health (Tuberculosis) Regulations, 1930, were received in respect of 32 cases, and 2 cases were brought to notice otherwise than by formal notification.

15 deaths were classified to Tuberculosis, a decrease of 2 on last year's figure.

In conclusion, I desire to express my appreciation of the services rendered at the Maternity and Child Welfare Centre by the Ladies' Voluntary Committee.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

W. T. Hessel M.B., Ch.B.
Medical Officer of Health.

REPORT OF THE CHIEF SANITARY INSPECTOR
TO THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
for the
YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 1940.

Sir,

I submit herewith an Interim Report on the work of the Public Health Department during 1940. At the opening of the year, the Department was already working on a full war-time basis; and throughout the period under review the major portion of the work done was concerned either with Civil Defence organisation, or other work of national importance, contributing directly to the war effort.

P A R T O N E.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES.

Water Supply.

The public supply has been satisfactory both in quality and quantity. A sample taken for chemical analysis in November was reported to be of "good organic purity, well suited for drinking and domestic purposes". Details of the analysis are as follows:-

	<u>Grains per gallon</u>
Total solid matter	18.0
Chlorine (combined)	1.0
Nitrogen as nitrates	.25
Albuminoid ammonia	.0007
(nitrites, free ammonia, lead, zinc, and copper were absent).	
Total hardness (Clark's Scale)	10.0
p.H. value	7.2

The water was also sampled from time to time for bacteriological examination. In accordance with the Ministry of Health's recommendations the following standards are now used to classify piped supplies:-

<u>Class of water</u>	<u>Presumptive B.Coli. count per 100 m.l.</u>
1. Highly satisfactory	less than 1
2. Satisfactory	1 to 2
3. Suspicious	3 to 10
4. Unsatisfactory	greater than 10.

Chlorinated supplies should always fall into Class 1; and the 14 samples taken from your own supply did in fact fall into this class.

Sanitary Accommodation and Drainage.

The general standard of closet accommodation in the Borough is high, being almost entirely on the water-carriage system. It has not been possible to make any systematic street-by-street improvements during the year; but as and when complaints have been made, the appropriate notices have been served, and a considerable number of unsatisfactory conditions have been rectified in this way.

As the year proceeded it became more and more difficult to get works done, and in 22 instances the Council had to authorise the service of statutory notices.

Eradication of Vermin.

The hydrogen cyanide method of disinfection adopted in 1939 was continued successfully throughout the present year, 22 premises being treated in this way. The general problem of vermin infestation in the Borough is one which eventually will have to be tackled on more systematic and comprehensive lines; an attempt to do this was commenced in 1939 but had to be discontinued on the outbreak of war. All complaints of infestation brought to my notice were dealt with successfully.

Housing.

Difficulty has been experienced in getting housing defects remedied. This has not always been the fault of the owner or agent; often building contractors were unable to cope with repairs, having few men to spare for this type of work. The scarcity of certain materials also contributed to the difficulty.

With these points in mind, owners were asked to remedy only housing defects of an urgent nature; these being cases in which action pursuant to the Public Health Act, 1936, would appropriately follow default. The more comprehensive repair of dwellinghouses envisaged in the provisions of the Housing Act, 1936, was considered unpracticable in the present situation.

Despite the difficulties referred to, a considerable amount of repair work has been done. Some of the houses scheduled for slum clearance are in extremely bad condition; but owners are being asked to provide more or less temporary remedies for the more urgent defects.

It will be observed that the routine inspection of property has been abandoned for the time being, and that the Department now relies almost entirely upon occupiers of property reporting all urgent defects to the Department if their landlords fail to get necessary works done within reasonable time.

Infectious Diseases.

Routine work in this connection has been continued. Inquiries into cases of infectious disease have been carefully made and all necessary steps have been taken to trace sources of infection, and prevent further spread. Where necessary, contacts have been excluded from school or work and full co-operation has been maintained with the military authorities and evacuation authorities in this matter.

P A R T T W O .

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

Meat Supply.

At the beginning of the year private slaughtering was in operation in the Borough; but early in January this ceased, the Ministry of Food having established a Central Abattoir in Pontefract. At this abattoir meat is prepared for distribution to retailers in the Borough, in Featherstone and Knottingley Urban districts, and in Osgoldcross Rural District. The whole of the meat slaughtered at the abattoir has been inspected.

The numbers of carcasses examined since the commencement of centralised slaughtering are:-

Beasts	2,357,	
Calves	215,	
Pigs	2,596,	
Sheep	10,738;	the total number of carcasses examined
		being 15,906.

The numbers of carcasses found to be unfit for human consumption are:-

	<u>Tuberculosis</u>	<u>Other diseases</u>	<u>Total</u>
Beasts	29½	4½	34
Calves	0	5	5
Pigs	15½	13	28½
Sheep	-	20	20
Totals:-	<u>45</u>	<u>42½</u>	<u>87½</u>

The numbers of organs and parts found to be unfit are:-

(a) due to tuberculosis	1,806; and
(b) due to other conditions	<u>675</u>
a total of	<u>3,481</u> organs and parts.

The total weight of meat condemned as unfit was: 22 tons, 9 cwts., 3 qtrs., 19 lbs.

In February, lesions of swine fever were found in 2 carcasses of pork. This was reported to the Ministry of Agriculture, as a result of which the whole of the herd concerned, comprising 54 animals, was brought to the Central Abattoir for emergency slaughter. Upon inspection 2 further cases of swine fever were found.

Milk Supply.

The introduction of the National Milk Scheme in July gave prominence to the high food-value of this commodity, and the consequent necessity for constant endeavour to maintain a pure supply.

The milch beasts in the Borough were examined during the year by the Ministry of Agriculture, and two animals were slaughtered under the provisions of the Tuberculosis Order, 1938.

Farm premises and producers' methods were inspected from time to time to ensure that both were hygienic; but I was unable to devote adequate time to this work.

One pasteuriser's licence is in force in the Borough. The premises concerned are maintained in a satisfactory condition, and every endeavour is made by the firm concerned to keep the plant in good condition. A new heater was installed during the year. Bacteriological control was maintained throughout the year, and only 3 of the many samples taken by the Department failed to reach the standard laid down by the Ministry of Health for pasteurised milk.

Food Premises.

In view of the importance at the present time of taking special precautions against the spread of alimentary infections, a campaign was launched towards the close of the year drawing the attention of people engaged in the food trades to their responsibilities to the public in this matter. The occupiers of 124 food premises were circularised, calling attention to the requirements of the Law relating to cleanliness, etc., on such premises, and the possible consequences of neglect. Later, premises were visited for the purpose of ensuring that the necessary requirements regarding washing facilities, and personal and general cleanliness were being complied with. Such allied matters as ventilation, water supply, storage of refuse, closet accommodation, general repair, etc., were dealt with at the same time.

Rats and Mice Destruction.

Closely connected with the subject of disease commonly conveyed by food are the fouling and destruction of food by rats. During the year a rat-catcher was appointed, and in his first 20 weeks' work in the Borough, he had accounted for the destruction of over 2,000 rats. This figure does not include rodents accounted for by gassing; and as some 20 lbs. of gas generating material were used during this period, the results, though not obvious, are likely to have been extensive.

P A R T T H R E E.

Special Duties.

I hold the following war-time Offices:-

Civil Defence Ambulance Service Officer,
Civil Defence Mortuary Service Officer,
Gas Contamination Officer,
Chief Billeting Officer,
Officer-in-Charge, Casualty Information Bureau,
Food Salvage Officer.

The Services for which I am responsible comprise some 170 volunteers. Apart from billeting, the work done in these Services has been mainly connected with organisation and training; the necessity for operational work not yet having presented itself.

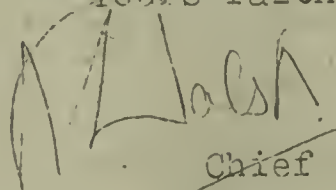
The information collected during recent years respecting housing and overcrowding conditions in the Borough has been of material help in making preparations for the billeting of refugees, homeless persons, evacuees, trainees, war workers, and civil defence workers. Members of the Pontefract Branch of the W.V.S. have made a valuable contribution by collecting information for the compilation of a register classifying all available housing accommodation in the Borough.

Staff.

At the opening of the year I was entirely without technical assistance; Mr. E.W. Cleaver was serving with H.M. Forces, and Mr. A. Smithson had left the service of the Corporation in the previous November. Mr. L.H. Cook took up his duties in succession to Mr. Smithson in January 1940. It is with regret that I record the death of Mr. Cleaver, on the 1st June 1940.

I am, Sir,

Yours faithfully,



M.R.San.I., M.S.I.A.,
Chief Sanitary Inspector.

Public Health Department,
Municipal Offices,
Pontefract.